

**To:** Abrams, Dan[Abrams.Dan@epa.gov]; Purchia, Liz[Purchia.Liz@epa.gov]; Harrison, Melissa[Harrison.Melissa@epa.gov]; Lee, Monica[Lee.Monica@epa.gov]; Allen, Laura[Allen.Laura@epa.gov]; StClair, Christie[StClair.Christie@epa.gov]; Hull, George[Hull.George@epa.gov]  
**From:** Ludwigsen, Emily  
**Sent:** Mon 8/10/2015 6:18:23 PM  
**Subject:** CO Spill - Clips

**ABC News**

<http://abcnews.go.com/US/million-gallons-contaminated-water-turns-river-orange-colorado/story?id=32989366>

-

**Three Million Gallons of Contaminated Water Turns River Orange in Colorado**

Kaylee Heck

August 10, 10:22 AM

-

The Animas River in Colorado has turned orange as a toxic spill continues to flow downstream and through to other states.

A team of workers with the Environmental Protection Agency accidentally released 3 million gallons of waste water from the Gold King Mine in Silverton, Colorado, on Aug. 5, the agency said. It was initially estimated to be a third of that size at one million gallons, the EPA said.

The contaminated water contains heavy metals, including lead and arsenic, turning the river water into a murky orange and yellow color, ABC affiliate KMGH reported.

"We are aware that there are a number of old mines that have water dams like, similar to this, and we're going to go back through them," Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper told KMGH. "People think about Colorado for our skies and our landscapes and our rushing rivers. They don't want those rivers to be orange."

There is no timetable yet for cleaning up the spill, Hickenlooper said, also adding that it's also too early to determine who should be held accountable.

The water will continue to flow through the San Juan National Forest, where the San Juan River will carry the contaminated water through Utah and eventually into Lake Powell, experts said.

It's expected to reach Lake Powell by Wednesday, experts said.

-

-

### **The Hill**

-

<http://thehill.com/policy/energy-environment/250709-epa-triples-colo-river-spill-estimate>

### **EPA triples Colo river spill estimate**

Timothy Cama

August 10, 10:19 AM

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) believes it spilled 3 million gallons of mine waste containing heavy metals into a Colorado river, it said.

The latest estimate of the spill came out Sunday, and it's triple the EPA's initial estimate regarding its release of mine waste from the Gold King Mine into the Animas River at Silverton, Colo., The Durango Herald reported.

The agency has been under harsh criticism from political and environmental leaders in the days following the spill, which turned the river bright orange and caused officials downstream to restrict water intake, recreation, fishing and other activities.

The waste, which EPA crews accidentally released when removing backfill from the abandoned mine, is believed to contain metals like cadmium, copper, zinc and manganese.

The spill has caused declarations of a state of emergency, and the EPA is considering declaring some areas Superfund sites.

"This is critical information for us," Shaun McGrath, the EPA's regional administrator, told residents

Sunday about the new spill estimate, the Herald said. "Now we have a much more reliable estimate of the volume that will help us with our work on modeling how this behaved and will continue to behave over the coming weeks and months."

The new estimate was based mostly on river flow readings from the United States Geological Survey, according to the Herald.

Local and state officials are angry that the EPA has still not released analysis of the tests it has conducted on the river. It has only released basic information about the metals it has found, and promised more information in coming days.

-

-

### **Junior College**

-

<http://www.ticnewspaper.com/no-health-risks-to-wildlife-after-colorado-mine-spill-21992/>

### **No health risks to wildlife after Colorado mine spill**

Adam Carter

August 10

The affiliate spoke to Rosemary Hart, who lives on the Animas River.

Stevenson says he would expect a pH closer to 7, and for that reason, the river stays closed from Colorado all the way to where it merges with the San Juan River west of Farmington. "Because this is an integral part of our community". "But we're going to win the war".

EPA regional administrator Shaun McGrath said the agency was "busting our tails" to provide a thorough lab analysis of the contaminants, which include lead and arsenic.

Meanwhile, as the toxic plume makes its way onto tribal land, Navajo Nation president Russell Begaye announced his intention to immediately take the EPA to court for the spill.

What should happen to the EPA.

The spill began on Wednesday after an EPA inspection team was called to the abandoned mine near the town of Silverton in southwestern Colorado to examine previously existing wastewater seepage.

More testing results are expected to be released later on Sunday.

"One of the big questions is how long does it linger", he said. "We still don't know how bad it is". "So that situation has changed".

"This action has been taken due to the serious nature of the incident and to convey the grave concerns that local elected officials have to ensure that all appropriate levels of state and federal resources are brought to bear to assist our community not only in actively managing this tragic incident but also to recover from it", La Plata County Manager Joe Kerby said in a statement. There are also reports that the contaminated water is heading towards Utah. "I don't know", McGrath said.

"This is a long-term impact".

McKean says the sludge laced with heavy metals moved so quickly after the spill that it would not have harmed animals that consumed it. "As we have storm surges, as we have flooding events, that sediment can and likely will get kicked back up into the water, and we're going to have to do ongoing monitoring and then potential closures in the future as well".

The amount of time needed for cleanup efforts is unknown. They are optimistic that the effects of the spill on terrestrial wildlife will be minimal, the EPA said. "The EPA admits fault, and as such must be accountable and held to the same standard".

The EPA is tasked with protecting these waters, but is now under fire after waiting nearly 24 hours to notify state and local officials of the spill.

According to an EPA Region 9 Emergency Response web page, the spill was triggered when workers

trying to clear debris accidentally damaged a makeshift berm that was containing polluted water.

Gov. John Hickenlooper plans to visit early this week. "Public safety and environment remain priority for Colorado!"

The toxic spill in the Animas River has flowed into New Mexico – and concerned have residents shut down supplies.

"This is still the height of our tourist season", said Roberts. "Now we have a much more reliable estimate of the volume that will help us with our work on modeling how this behaved and will continue to behave over the coming weeks and months". "Someone had told the rafting companies, so, by mid-afternoon, none of them were operating in the water".